

A FEW
MATHEMATICAL AND CRITICAL
REMARKS
ON THE
SWORD.

*“Nihil honestum esse potest,
Quod Justitia vacat.”*

DUBLIN
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MDCCLXXXI.

The right honourable

JOHN SCOT,

His Majesty's Attorney General, &c. &c.

Sir,

Being unknown to the Great, is attended with this pleasing circumstance, that the humble tribute of honest admiration and genuine applause, cannot be ascribed to the overflowing of gratitude, nor, to the meanness of adulation: conscious of my own integrity, I ingenuously declare, if I knew but one man in the kingdom, to have a sounder judgment and a finer imagination, a more humane and expanded heart, and a more spirited and judicious arm, I should have been still more presumptuous than I am, in prefixing *Your Name* to so trifling a production.

I am,

Sir,

With the greatest respect,

Your most humble, and

Most obedient Servant,

The Author.

INTRODUCTION.

At the solicitations of a few friends, I have consented to let these Remarks be made public, after their having been thrown aside among waste paper for above ten years. Let me now declare, I wrote them merely as a relaxation of my mind from severer studies: I also candidly confess, I never read one line on the subject. And though this acknowledgement may at once prejudice these lines in the opinion of many, yet I am aware there are some men, who would willingly fill up the parenthesis of a leisure halfhour, in reading *Original Thoughts* in almost any Art or Science, especially at this period, when hundreds of volumes are published anually, without containing one new or original idea.

As business has prevented me from copying these lines, (and consequently from either correcting, diminishing or augmenting the original) the hints are penned just as they arose to my mind at different times, which is the reason they have frequently no immediate connexion with each other.

I have, indeed, by this little effort, the satisfaction of proving, that there is scarce any art in nature but may receive some lights from the Mathematics. If any persons are pleased to censure the manner in which I have amused myself on this subject, or, as the first of English poets expresses himself,

*Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer –*

they have my hearty concurrence; for I can assure them, it will by no means offend me, if that was of consequence; as I have enjoyed myself, not a little, in having a demonstration, in propria persona, how much may be said on an *Art*, by one who knows very little of the practice.

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REMARK 1.

On relecting that our lives are given us, as sacred bequests from the Almighty, which it is our duty to defend: can it be either whimsical or irreligious to assert, that endeavouring to arrive at dexterity and knowledge in the Science of Defence, must be equally virtuous, as it is polite and spirited?

2. If a nation does not acquire the use of arms, in the same proportion of its celebrity for fertility, trade, manufactures and riches, it must one day become the prey of some warlike people. Hence may we not conclude, that individuals acquiring the knowledge of Arms, must be, tho' perhaps in a remote degree, of public utility?

Therefore, on the first law of nature, Self-preservation, and in some degree on the love of our country and the good of society, we may ground the Art of Fencing; to defend, being its grand object. And as no man ought to draw his Sword, but in a case of necessity (what I think such I shall mention hereafter); so even

the offensive part, or what, in the language of our art, is called Attacking and Returning, may be said to arise from the first principle, Defence; for, to defend properly in action, a man must make vigorous and spirited Passes. I shall not here mention the necessity of acquiring a knowledge of the Sword, either as an essential to a liberal education, and of which no gentleman with any propriety can plead ignorance; as an exercise, more immediately recommended to those who lead a sedentary life; nor as a polite and spirited relaxation, most powerfully preventing and overcoming obstructions, which physicians acknowledge to be the primary cause of almost all disorders. I must confess, that I look on the exercise of Fencing in such a light, that I esteem professors of the Sword as the most respectable physicians; for the same reason that I would deem a man more my friend, who would prevent my wants, than he who would relieve them.¹

3. As excellence is scarce attainable in any art, so it is no less difficult in this, and requires a very rare and happy union, viz. A tolerable degree of strength, agility, and spirit: strength, not to be overcome by the most vigorous passes; agility, to advance, retire, or return, as occasion may require, almost instantaneously; and spirit, to attack with a glow and ardour, a confidence and intrepidity, that may damp and dismay. But no less requisite are coolness, deception, and quickness of apprehension; for that warmth of attack that is praise-worthy, must ever flow from thought, and be the result of design: (for attacking violently, often proceeds from cowardice, despair or ignorance:) like a prudent general, you must ever have in view the possibility of your failure, and by all means endeavour to acquire a steadiness of mind and body, that may prevent you from being thrown into confusion, should your pass miss the center. Deception, manoeuvre, or feints, are also essential to the art; to wit, making the passes in attacks or returns, which you may apprehend to be

1. See Remark 90.

unexpected, and least dangerous to yourself, or where you see an open; but in this case, you must beware that it is not a design to take you on: and in general, be cautious lest you should be worsted by a deception of your own. Quickness of thought is requisite, to determine in the heat of action, the passes most likely to deceive, or quickest of return. I shall here observe, what indeed is universally known, that any pass which is not expected must deceive; so frequently the most simple passes become central. To these qualifications may be added, those necessary to acquire excellence in any art; attention in the observance of directions and rules, indefatigable practice, and a certain taste and grace in execution, which characterises the performer in every exhibition.

4. If we conceive a right line drawn on the ground, in the direction of your adversary, it is evident, the more your body, legs, thighs and arms are in that direction, the less liable you are to be hit; and the closer your parades are, that is, the less they deviate from that line the better; also, the lower you lie the safer: for it is manifest, the less the surface presented to your antagonist the better, provided you always stand, or throw yourself in such an attitude, that you can parade and pass with the utmost ease and vigour; for, you diminish the surface in breadth, the more accurately you preserve your line; and in length, the lower you lie, as any person may experience, by throwing himself in a regular, and then into an irregular position.

5. To hollow the hand may be attended with the worst consequence, (what I mean by hollowing the hand, is not keeping the elbow in the line with the shoulder and the wrist) as by so doing you leave an open for your antagonist, and of which an able and quick-sighted one will certainly avail himself. Again, supposing you hit when your arm is hollowed with a certain force; the same hit with the same exertion, if your hand and arm

made a right angle with his body, that is, if you were in right position, would meet your adversary with greater force. The reason of this, and also the proportion of the loss, is immediately deducible from this well known demonstrated theorem, That the force wherewith a body impinges on a given surface, in a rectangular direction, is to its percussion in an oblique one, as radius is to the sine of the angle of incidence. – And to extend this consideration, the force which in passing might be of no effect when your arm is hollowed, will often become home, central and satisfactory, if in proper position.

6. In the round parades, (or counter in tierce and quart) the Sword should describe in its proper movement, either the whole or part of a conical superficies, the base being nearly parallel to the breast of your adversary, and the apex or vertex, being the center of the shell, or rather indeed the wrist; for the motion should arise and continue from the wrist, and not from the arm: the reason for which I apprehend to be, that the motion can be made with more expedition from the wrist (leaving the arm in the line for opposition); yet were we to allow the arm could be moved with equal velocity, the motion from the wrist would be preferable; for in the former case, the line describing the conical superficies would be lengthened. And here it may not improperly be considered as a mechanical lever, and consequently less force at the feeble (or foible) would be requisite to put the Sword from the line.

7. If it is asked me, to determine the diameter of the circle, which is the base of the conical fluent (if I may be allowed the expression)? I answer, that this must be principally, if not wholly, determined by the superficial content of what this parade is to guard. A man who singles his body finely, and lies low, may make his parades much closer, than he whose position is false and irregular.

8. When you parry, or are parried, be careful to come to your line as accurately and as quick as possible, and not, through a flutter of spirits, allonge before you come thereto; and be equally careful not to pass or cross your line, as in one case you leave an open on the tierce, and in the other upon quart, and in both cases are abandoned, in a more or less degree, proportionable to your deviation.

9. In not having a fine recovery to your line, I apprehend you lose the opportunity of feinting in action, and, in general, there is scarce any thing more decisive: for example, in the most simple case, suppose a quart thrown, which I ought to parry neatly and at once from the wrist; but on the contrary, if I follow and bear, my adversary if expeditious may slip and pass again, or if in recovery I pass the line to the tierce, I must leave an open; therefore it would be the greatest folly to attempt to feint in such a circumstance.

10. A straight arm is of such utility, in preventing the approach of your adversary, that I apprehend it could never have been recommended to bend it, but for the sake of expedition; for without this reserve is made with the greatest accuracy, there will be light or an open given (light and an open are synonymous terms) when the arm is angulated: now as the body cannot be moved with the desired and necessary expedition, a flexure in the arm encreases the velocity of the pass; for the Sword is moved by the combined forces of the forward motion of the body and the elastic extension of the arm; and if the arm has the proper bent, and the allonge properly made, these two forces act in the same direction; consequently, the pass is sent home with a vast encrease of velocity.

11. The arm at every pass should be raised, and the head somewhat inclined, that it may be covered by the hand; I say, the arm should be raised instantaneously on making the pass,² the body spring from the left knee, the right foot in the line, and right leg perpendicular; and in recovery, as before mentioned, be cautious not to deviate from the line, or let your arm fall.

12. Suppose two men nearly of equal judgment engage, but one superior in strength, I conceive, if the weaker parries a few inches nearer his antagonist's feeble than usual, and a few inches nearer his own shell, he will render the superiority of his adversary's strength of little service; the reason is evident from the nature of the lever.

13. All direct parades I take to be quicker than the round parades, pretty nearly in the proportion of the diameter of a circle, to its semi-circumference, and sometimes to the whole circumference: hence it seems to follow, that we should always make use of the direct parades; and indeed it would be certainly best so to do, if we could be sure of the pass that would be made; but from the variety of feints and deceptions, this is almost impossible; therefore, those parades that parry all the thrusts are, I think, those we should bestow our particular attention on: but certainly, great practice is required to arrive at a sufficient degree of expedition in their performance.

14. In making a good pass, the left knee must spring, the body be thrown forward, and the right arm straightened in one and the

2. Particularly the wrist, so that the point of the Foil should be directed to the breast; by this the thrust appears more graceful, and shews fine opposition: on hitting, the Foil gets a proper bent, and is not liable to be snapped. Beginners, by not observing this, run the risk of hitting each other in the face, and are constantly breaking the foils.

same instant; for if one of these are performed a moment after the other, it degrades the pass.

15. To spring back, I apprehend, is necessary, when in some measure you have lost your line or position, and are apprehensive of an attack thus unprepared; for in this spring you are to throw yourself in guard, and be ready for an attack. When you hit, I think it is best to spring back with a bate, a batter, or the round parade, until you find the touch satisfactory to your adversary; but, continuing in guard, be prepared to give him one if he advances, that may be decisive; for, tho' mercy is the constant attribute of the Christian and the Gentleman, yet it would be, in this case, a kind of suicide to hesitate a moment from giving, if possible, the terminating passes.

*“Let's leave the hermit pity with our mothers;
“And when we have our armour buckled on,
“The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords.”*

16. Whenever you make a pass send it with the utmost spirit, and be sure to plant the center, let the pass be what it may; for, as rays passing through convex glasses have their particular focii, or points of coincidence, so all allonges must tend to one center, namely, the breast of your antagonist; after which, it is your business to recover with all imaginable agility, and this, in a great degree, is accomplished by what is termed Breaking Measure, which consists not only in moving your whole body at once backward, but having a motion from the small of the back; this almost lessens by one half the time of your recovery, by doubling your velocity, and gives an uncommon grace at the foils when finely executed.

17. The general rule for direct passes, apparently admits of a judicious exception, from considering the equality of the angle of incidence and reflection: for, I conceive it may sometimes happen, that the center when covered in a direct direction, may be hit by an allonge reflected from your adversary's Sword. This I mention rather as a matter of speculation: thus we find gunners, when they cannot see the place intended to be hit in a rectilineal direction, plant themselves so that the incident angle shall reflect the ball to, or on, the place desired. I am aware that in so doing you must injure your line, and consequently give light; but it ought to be only great swordsmen that, like Shakspeare in poetry, "Snatch a grace beyond the rules of art." But this graceful negligence, and heroic soaring above rules, should never be attempted but when there is a guard for the failure; and perhaps, as already hinted, it is too daring in the case of life and death.

18. In the knowledge of the Sword, as in some of the greatest of the sciences, there are many things in which you must be perfect, and expeditious in the performance of, before you can attempt their general application: thus in the Analysis we learn the arithmetical rules and geometrical axioms; but when these rules had best be used, or these axioms applied in any particular investigation, depends entirely on the judgment of the artist; so in like manner we learn a variety of advances, passes and feints, when taking what is called the Breast Lessons from a master; but when we face an antagonist in loose play, the manner of attack must depend upon our own taste, judgment and execution. But ever design, before you attempt to execute; and let this be an universal maxim, or as Shakspeare expresses it, "Be one of those that with the fineness of their souls, by reason guide their execution. Thus Homer describes Achilles, when on the point of encountering Hector, approaching with circumspection and meditating the wound."³

3. Shakspeare describes Achilles in much the same manner in Troilus and Cressida, as Homer has done in the 22d book of the Iliad.

19. It is impossible to determine the best manner of attack, as has been already observed; for that depends in a great measure on the sight of your adversary, or your own excellence in certain passes and parades; but still there may some advice be given on this head. You must be ever cautious (if with any tolerable swordsman, for a person very ignorant will not know he gives the opportunity) at too warmly or incautiously taking the light that may be given you; but notwithstanding, by great dexterity, you may make a pass become central, in consequence of the great open given, which you were designed to be hit or timed upon; that is, when you see an open, though you apprehend it be designedly given: I am not absolutely for declining to attempt sending a pass in, but you are undone if you do not guard against the return or parading pass your antagonist may make. As I think this is of the greatest importance, I shall endeavour to illustrate more fully my meaning by an example. Suppose on the advance, or after passes have been made, I see full light on the tierce, I throw with the utmost vigour a full tierce or quart over; this is what is expected, and your adversary takes you thereon: if you are not mindful of this you are certainly hit, but if you parry and return, it is greatly in your favour; for his mind being engrossed by his first design, and you passing where he expected, perhaps he may, nay certainly will, imagine you to be deceived, and will therefore be unprepared for being thrown off and returned on.

20. If possible, make those passes which if you fail leave you the least exposed and have the best returns, and beware of approaching too near; for there are men who seem to be insensible, that while they advance, their adversary may be

*Tell me, ye heavens, in which part of his body
Shall I destroy him; whether there or there?
That I may give the local wound a name,
And make distinct the very breach, whereout
Hector's great spirit flew. Answer me, heavens!*

considered to approach, though he continue his former situation and position.

21. A vigorous attack will sometimes disorder your antagonist, which must be of service to you, either by giving you a better opportunity of passing, or by his passing in a hurry, leave you an easy return: but an attack seldom makes any considerable impression on a good swordsman.

22. A man ought not to depend or lay too much stress, either on his activity, strength, intrepidity, prudence, or his knowledge of the art; for, on an engagement, it is impossible to determine or foresee from which of these he is to hope for superiority: they ought to be as life-guards, always ready to be called to your assistance in any imminent contingency.

23. I think it may be no bad device to retire once or twice, particularly with one you are a stranger to, which perhaps will give a confidence to your antagonist, and render him incautious, of which you may avail yourself. Or you must have the opportunity of seeing if he advance perfectly in the line; and if he deviate on making his next advance, he may be finely timed by a spirited pass, which had better be a plain quart, or quart over; for after all, there are no passes preferable to the straight allonges.

24. The superior strength that many seem to have, proceeds from a greater degree of quickness; for the force of any body, striking or meeting another, is as the product of the quantity of matter and celerity; therefore, the greater degree of quickness, the greater the absolute force; or, as philosophers term it, the greater the momentum.

25. With a violent fencer, or one who advances without adhering to rules, and depends on the violence of his attack and strength of his arm, your best way is to wait temperately, or retire, with a fine line and opposition, as before, until the moment he comes within distance; shew him then, by the vigour and spirit of your pass, that you only waited for the proper period to evince him, that your coolness was the result of intrepidity, rectified by judgment.

26. You should never let the point of your Sword pass the shell of your adversary's, except on an allonge; for it is certain he need not let you approach so near if he pleases, and has judgment; therefore, do not accustom yourself to advance so close, even with those who may suffer you, for if you get such a habit, you will certainly be hit when you face a tolerable proficient.

27. When you find your adversary has one particular parade which he constantly uses, then it is your business to deceive him on this his favourite parade; thus if he uses the round parade, you may deceive him by circling; if the half circle, by coming round and throwing; if he forces or batters, slip and pass; if he flanks, throw a full quart, &c. &c. Hence it follows, that if you find your adversary parries with the simple parades, you have no reason to expect success from, or to attempt doubling or circling on him.

28. The reason I make use of the expression, Throwing yourself in Guard, is in order to convey an idea of the necessity of taking the proper attitude in a moment, without settling or fixing by a number of motions. The utility of being in an instant ready to defend or attack with propriety is abundantly manifest. But to

consider this in another light: Surprise is one cause of the sublime, which is ever attended with a more or less degree of terror; it follows then, the more instantaneous your transition from a common to a fencing attitude, the more the mind of your adversary is unsettled, and the spectators opinion of you raised if at the foils. Mr. Burke's remark, in his treatise on the Sublime, perfectly agrees with this observation: "Whatever either in sights or sounds makes the transition from one extreme to the other easy, causes no terror, and consequently can be no cause of greatness. In every thing sudden and unexpected we are apt to start." And in this surprise which may be raised in the breast of your opponent, it is not impossible you may disarm or worst him immediately.

29. The right foot should not report on an allonge till after the thrust is lodged: the reason I have heard assigned for this direction was, that the report before the thrust, would be a warning for your adversary to be on his guard; but this reason is by no means sufficient. I conceive the following to be the true one: if the right foot comes not down until the instant after the thrust has been lodged, the pass has the additional force of your body, which is thrown with violence forward; therefore, whatever obstacle it meets first, subducts from the absolute momentum a quantity of force sufficient to resist it, which in a thrust rightly made is the breast of your adversary.

Sometimes on changing you should stamp the right foot, (this we usually term an attack, the French Appel) in order to deceive your adversary, by calling his attention that way, and then make the single or double feint. To put your antagonist on his guard by rousing his attention, and then instantly to overcome him, is an honourable Coup de Main at the Sword.

30. In the round parades, there is an addition of force to the feeble, arising from a cause perhaps never properly considered:

every part of the Sword in these parades, may be conceived as a body revolving about a center; now as every part of the Sword makes a revolution in the same time, the velocity of the extreme of the feeble is the greatest, from the conical nature of its motion; and as the momenta of bodies are as the quantities of matter multiplied into their respective celerities, and as the quantities of matter in this case, are not considered or supposed to be equal, the momenta will be as the different celerities, therefore the force of the feeble is the greatest; I say greatest, abstracting the nature of the power communicating the motion and the resistance of the medium.

31. I chose to estimate the real force on every inch of the Sword to parry a thrust when in the round parade, I would consider the Sword as a lever, supported at one end by a fulcrum, and then make allowance for the different celerities of the parts; but as this would be troublesome, and must be built upon hypotheses that from the nature of things could not be universal, I imagine it would, indeed, be too refined a speculation. I would not be apprehended as if it were my opinion, that this little addition of force, arising from the different celerities of the parts of the Sword, by any means counterbalances the different forces of the feeble and fort arising from the nature of the lever.

32. When you parry, the force wherewith you strike your adversary's Sword, must in some measure quicken your return; for the reaction on your Sword, must ever be equal to the action on your opponent's, and this reaction brings you to, or towards the line; and therefore it appears to me, the person who parries, if he is equally as good a Swordsman as his antagonist, ought to hit on the return.

33. A simple pass is expressed by one, (or ha); a feint and pass, one, two, (or ha, ha); of a double feint and pass, one, two, three, (or ha, ha, ha.) When one, two, three are mentioned, they have no reference to any space or division of time, (like the notes of a bar in music) as might be at first imagined; but what I conceive by it is, that a simple pass should be made by one uniform motion in the line; that a feint should have one motion only in the feint, and one more in bringing it to the line and passing, that is feint and pass, in one, two: a double feint in like manner, one motion in each feint, and one for the allonge, that is one, two, three: it is generally thought they cannot be too expeditious, provided the directions already given are closely adhered to.

34. I say, it is my opinion that the feints cannot be too expeditious, provided they are answered by your antagonist; but if otherwise, I see no particular reason why you should continue in your first design; therefore, in order to make your adversary answer them, perhaps they should be marked more deliberately than is usual, and let your exertion be shewn in the quickness of your pass.

35. I would not have a learner be very anxious if his passes are not as quick as he could wish, for it is better he should at first give his attention to the manner of throwing, for practice alone will beget celerity; but an accurate and just method of throwing, can be acquired only from consideration, and attention to the rules; for if once a bad habit is acquired, which often arises from endeavouring to be expeditious, the difficulty, or rather impossibility, attending the cure, is very notorious.

36. If we make a strict observation on the Guard, we shall find the human frame could not possibly be put in any attitude so well calculated for the different intentions of the art, namely Offence

and Defence. I have already proved the utility of preserving the line and lying low; I shall now consider the rest of the attitude. Lying in quart, you are perfectly covered, that is, there is no open, therefore your Sword must be disordered before you can well be hit. Of all positions the quart is the strongest the arm can be kept in; the joints being as it were supporters, to prevent the arm from falling. The left knee and right arm bent, gives the power of darting in, with an elastic spring, on your pass; your belly kept in, makes you more perpendicular, and consequently firmer on the ground, having your body as a pillar upon the center of its pedestal: a full chest is also necessary, to preserve the perpendicular, and gives a greater power to the arm: the left arm extended, or rather forming a gentle curve, preserves the equilibrium, and serves to give the body that play which is desirable; and letting it fall, or rather forcing it down on the side and thigh at the time of the pass, is an addition thereto. The legs extended at what is called the Distance, gives the power of lying low, and you body finely poised in the middle, as already mentioned, makes the line of direction, as philosophers term it, pass through the center, and consequently you are in the position which admits of the least danger of falling, being in that case as firm as possible. I have not here said any thing on the elegance of the guard; for if any one position were taken merely for being graceful, without being calculated for some use, I would adopt the most inelegant in its place, if the utility of such an attitude were evident or demonstrable; but it is not a little pleasing, that the attitudes most spirited and graceful, are those which have been experienced to answer best the grand objects of the Sword.

37. In throwing quart and tierce, a man cannot indeed be too perfect, as scarce any thing is more improving at first, or shews the taste, elegance and politeness of the Sword; but in this, as often in loose play, there are many things practised which had much better be omitted; such as dropping the point of your Foil, standing carelessly out of guard, parrying in a manner impossible

to be put in execution in real action, &c. which sometimes even fine Swordsmen fall into, from a wanton exuberance of taste; and though really wrong, and absolutely contrary to the first principles of the Sword, yet as original in them, they become, abstracted from a rigorous judgment, no unpleasing peculiarity: but how ridiculous is it to see every puny whipster, playing off at second-hand the faults of persons, whom they are incapable of copying in any of their excellencies. There is a maxim I think that ought to be universal, That every position, parade and pass, be calculated either to preserve yourself, or annoy your antagonist, I say in loose play particularly; for if taste and elegance are to be looked for in throwing quart and tierce, execution is the object of loose play. I would therefore recommend, whenever you fence loose, to suppose yourself at the Sword facing an antagonist, and playing that great game where life is the stake; consequently you will give yourself no airs, or what are falsely called elegancies, that may subject you to be hit or disarmed, as every such circumstance must be extremely dangerous at the Sword, which those who are accustomed to, cannot, in action, wholly divest themselves of. Besides, a man being inured to reflect on any circumstance which must, or may probably happen, will doubtless be the better prepared to meet that action or crisis, however dreadful, with determined coolness and dauntless intrepidity. Therefore, I think it is but a fair and rational deduction, that one who has been accustomed to the supposition of defending in the case of life and death, will not be so liable to be intimidated, or thrown into confusion, whenever this unfortunate circumstance may really happen, as the man, who never considered in loose play more than mere taste and exercise.⁴

4. I hope no person will do me the injustice to conceive, that I could wish any Gentleman should divest himself for a moment of any action or motion elegantly useful. If Virgil is applauded for breaking even his clods with the air of a gentleman, and happily engrafting, as it were, a kind of rural dignity on the more laborious exercises of agriculture, how absolutely essential must it be to adhere with exactness, to all the etiquette which politeness and custom have wisely established, in so

38. To be a good Swordsman, it seems to me necessary, to have certain philosophic consistency, an elevated steadiness of mind, which, in all human occurrences, is the undoubted characteristic of the truly great. A man ought to have so much diffidence, as will prevent him from forming any contemptible opinion of the abilities of his adversary, arising from an ideal comparison; and consequently, this happy distrust will render him circumspect and wary; for the best Swordsman, pluming himself on his knowledge, may fatally be convinced of his error by a mere bungler. On the other hand, a certain degree of confidence is requisite to prevent him from a mean timidity, which may at least be equally prejudicial. In a word, be cautious and spirited.

39. Whenever you pass, endeavour to come with your fort on your adversary's feeble; this, when the pass is nearly instantaneous, as all allonges should be, binds your adversary's Sword, by weakening his force and encreasing your own, and may make that pass become central, which otherwise might be parried.

40. I would recommend Flanking principally when your adversary's Sword is in play, and his motion favours your binding; for by taking him thus, you make his own force conspire against him, and consequently less force of yours necessary.

liberal, yet so warm and animated an exercise as that of Fencing. Men of sense and education, more particularly while Fencing, will never deviate from that manly and elevated good breeding, which indeed no man ever knew in theory without the practice, and is the happy mean between the frippery of the dancing-school and the blunt rusticity of the sod.

41. When you flank, be sure endeavor to secure or bind your adversary's Sword well; but attempt this in such a manner, that supposing you miss, you may not fly from the line. To acquire this method, I think a very good device is for a master, when giving the flanking lesson, now and then, when he thinks it is least expected, to slip his foil away; this will more effectually bring a learner to perform it in the manner to be desired, than any direction whatever, even from a master, as the manner is not easily defined; but there is scarce any person but will perceive his defect, after a few disappointments.

42. The time of a pass being one; of a change and pass, or feint and pass, being one, two; it follows, in my mind, that while your adversary is changing, or feinting, you have time to send in a thrust: this is usually called Timing, and, when finely executed, is the perfection of the art; but should not be attempted for a considerable time, or until you become a very tolerable proficient, for with beginners it is nothing but a scene of confusion and precipitancy.

43. At the same time let me remark, that it is equally wrong in tolerable Swordsmen to exclude timing, as it is in beginners to attempt it; resolving not to practice it until you can perform it well, would be equally judicious with resolving never to mount a horse, until you were perfect in the manage; or of bathing, until you knew how to swim.

44. Therefore, whenever you change before you pass, or feint before you allonge, be sure to remember your may be timed, which, without you are prepared, will be very dangerous.

45. In every parade, keep your point as near the breast of your adversary as possible, for the convenience of an immediate return; and (as the congress of your point, with the breast of your opponent, is the sole object of your contention) on every advance and retreat, let the point be kept in this, its proper direction, as much as possible; even a bad Swordsman adhering to this direction, will in a great measure disconcert a good one.

46. When you bend your arm, be sure have the bent, or elbow, in the line; this, I think, is by no means sufficiently attended to, and therefore repeat the hint; for the flexure of the arm is not what gives light, but the deviation from the line.

47. I by all means recommend parrying with a pass; for this is really expedition itself, and therefore it may be sometimes advisable to give light, when you are thus prepared to receive your opponent.

48. Timing, as I have just mentioned, is the perfection of the art, when finely executed; for you must be all eye and attention when you face a regular timer, for he will certainly throw, if you make but one motion beside the pass. But it is also necessary to manifest, what appears to me to be yet a safer and finer manner of timing: when two men throw themselves in guard, they seldom or ever are within the sphere of action, or within allonging reach for each other; therefore, one must advance, before either can possibly throw to effect; the one who does not advance, has it in his power to wait for the other, with a precision and watchfulness indeed very hard to arrive at, until the instant he comes within reach, when a pass may be sent in spiritedly, before the person who is advancing with a design of throwing, has time to send in his. For, to allonge when out of distance, would be equally absurd, as for a gunner to fire at an object out

of reach; therefore you must, by a Geometrical Glance, if I may be allowed the expression, measure your distance before you throw: and if you are accustomed to estimate distances by your eye, which is a matter of more utility than may at first be imagined (and therefore justly inculcated by Rousseau to his Emilius), you will scarce ever be mistaken. This is termed Timing on the Advance. Hence it follows, from this and what has been already said, that after you have thrown yourself in guard, you must be cautious of either advancing, changing, or feinting, as you may in general be timed in any one of them. But again, let me repeat it, for I think it cannot be inculcated too often, do not by any means let this lead you to a watchfulness that may degenerate into timidity; for, on the whole, I think the intrepidity of a Cæsar, to the full as requisite as the circumspection of a Fabius. It seems to follow, that you had better, as much as possible, keep at one side of your adversary's Sword, for every change admits of a time, if you are within distance.

49. I am highly pleased to have discovered, that raising the hand on making the pass, sends the thrust into your adversary's breast, in a rectangular direction, which justifies the desiring that position to be constantly preserved, in the most philosophic sense; for when you throw, your adversary is on the parade breaking measure; therefore, the surface of his breast makes an acute angle with its former perpendicular, being changed from its vertical direction; and this angle will be found, I believe, to be nearly equal to the angle which the Sword makes on the pass with the level or horizontal line; and if so, the thrust is sent in an angle of ninety degrees to the breast. So this, which has ever been considered only as a security to the person passing, I have here proved to be that direction which is of the most force, as well as security; at one and the same time defending, or covering yourself, in the best manner possible, and sending the thrust in with the greatest force, proportionate to the power.

50. To force a man's Sword from the line by a batter, I think dangerous; for when a man advances with a batter, with intent to disorder, he may be finely timed thereon. This method I believe to be seldom used by a good Swordsman; for while he is making the batter, you may throw either before he comes to the line, or after he has passed it; for your adversary in order to add force, finds it necessary to raise his Sword; this will manifestly encrease the impetus, but gives the double opportunity of timing, as above mentioned.

51. To preserve the equilibrium of the body is the greatest consequence; for when that is injured, a man is no longer in possession of himself: whenever you find your opponent thus, attack with a double ardour, and aim at ending the day with an eclat, which may redound as much to your humanity as to your courage. What would be dangerous to attempt before, may now, perhaps, be accomplished; for he may be disarmed, thrown, or overcome in some manner, without taking his life. Telemachus, when engaging the Rhodian in the island of Crete, is made to owe his victory to putting this advice in practice: "Stepping back he writhed his body, to avoid the stroke; by this motion the equilibrium was destroyed, and I easily threw him to the ground."

52. An error attending all the fencers I have ever seen (two only excepted) is parrying wider than there is occasion, particularly in loose play; hence it must appear, that the greatest difficulty attends acquiring accuracy in this point; for, by right, the Sword of your adversary should not be followed an hair's breadth beyond what is absolutely necessary to throw it completely off from the body, as your return can be quicker. It may be said, the farther you have to go, the farther he has to come to parry. This proves too much, therefore proves nothing. But I would

recommend a determined force, such as I have endeavoured to describe in the remark on flanking.

53. I am aware that beginners will think it impossible to reap advantage from written instructions, their minds and bodies being all confusion when engaged; but custom will soon habituate them to arrange and associate their ideas in such a manner, that the moment an opportunity offers for a pass, the proper one will arise in the mind, and present itself for execution. But it is not to be expected that the most accurate description, or the best advice and explanation, can make a man fence well, without indefatigable industry; yet this is most certain, that it is with this art as with every other, a theoretic knowledge must ever lead to the perfection of the executive. I desire no cavilling at my mentioning the theory of the art; I am aware (as well as any man who will criticize, for the querulous are generally of weak parts) of the usual distinction between a Science and an Art; I use the expression in its common, and perhaps equally just acceptance, for every thing as it demonstrates, becomes speculative or theoretic; and executive, as it reduces to practice. But, on second thought, I shall give any one leave (though doubtless he will not wait for my permission) to be as elaborately dull, or critically insignificant, with any of these lines as he pleases.

54. Perhaps it may be objected, though it is in fact done away by the title page, that I have used too many physical terms; but this I believe has neither weight nor force; for almost every Gentleman who applies himself to the Sword, has had a liberal education, and consequently will be pleased at an attempt of grafting this art upon the most elevated of the sciences, i.e. the mathematical; and perhaps it may be something novel, to have proved this art, in many instances, to be so closely connected with the common precepts of philosophy.

55. Palming, or throwing passes aside with the left hand or arm, is entirely condemned by most masters. I shall here consider it unprejudiced; and though I am not even a tolerable proficient in the executive part of the Sword, yet as any thing contrary to reason must be repugnant to science, it follows, that almost every cool and dispassionate reasoner may judge of general principles. The grand objection, I take to be, that those who palm, in order to have the full play with their left hand, stand in false position, encreasing the breadth presented to their antagonist: this is allowed to be wrong, by the advocates for palming, and it is unfair in gentlemen of the contrary opinion to argue from the abuse of it; for they must allow the practice, or not: if they do, there is no argument; if they do not, it certainly ought not to be for some persons performing it irregularly and injudiciously. Again, I have heard it said, that indeed it may do very well in real action, but at the foils it is mere bungling, and no fencing. This reasoning is so very futile, that it is scarce worth answering: for, to what purpose do young men practise, if not to defend themselves in the best manner possible; and if it be allowed proper in action, how are we to attain a facility or expedition in performance without practice? Or how are we to practice but with foils? If we are to look on Fencing only in the light of an exercise, the left hand used as an auxiliary renders it still a more general one to the human frame. Again, it is well known that two of the best Swordsmen existing, mistaking each other's design, through an intemperate warmth, or some undefinable accident, may both pass at the same time: I ask any Gentleman, on this occasion, or any other that may be supposed, if palming would be of service. If it be allowed, and I believe it cannot be denied, I then must conclude, it is improper to exclude palming entirely from a place in the art. If I may be allowed here, in some measure to digress, and indulge speculation, I shall draw an argument from unimproved nature. I am persuaded no man uninstructed but would use his left hand, and perhaps would deem it ridiculous and absurd, that when nature gave two arms to

protect and defend, art should exclude one from the most grateful of all offices. I speak this from experience, having made warm passes with a foil against many almost ignorant of the art, to prove the hypothesis, and have found them all endeavour to palm; hence we may conclude, that mankind in general would do so, and of consequence that it is natural, and therefore, when directed and improved by reason, may be made serviceable: for to bring any art to perfection, we must ever have in view the grand original, Nature, who, notwithstanding her outlines may be coarse, yet they are ever just; Providence leaving imperfect things within reach of human abilities, to impel us to the exertion of our faculties. But when we go opposite to Nature, we fly from the useful and the beautiful; it is our business to fill up the voids, and our judgment is shewn by continuing in the direction where Nature seemed to quit us, until we trace out her footsteps, and discover her happy vestiges once more; for on the Doric base of Nature, the Corinthian superstructure of the sciences must ever be erected: Art may indeed polish, but Nature alone can give the substance.

That palming was the custom of former ages, we have many instances to prove; I shall mention but one, from that inimitable copier of Nature, Shakspeare, "Tybalt here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay: Romeo that spoke him fair, bid him bethink how nice the quarrel was; all this uttered with gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed, could not take truce with the unruly spleen of Tybalt, deaf to peace, but that he tilts with piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast, who all as hot, turns deadly point to point, and with a martial scorn, *with one hands beats cold death aside*, and with the other sends it back to Tybalt." This one instance demonstrates, that this manner of defending has some degree of antiquity on its side, and has been used by men whose bravery and judgment were never controverted; for I have heard it mentioned as a want of either or both, to use palming. At this period, it was absolutely necessary for men to be expert at the Sword, as personal combats were then not only considered as a redress for grievances (or rather imaginary evils) not cognizable

by law, but were used as a judicial process, even to the greatest enthusiasm of folly, as all historians of those times agree. I say, by their making personal engagements a mode of decision in cases of honour, (for there have been certain ideas of honour in all countries and ages) as well as of life and of property: and as a test of truth, justice and fidelity, it is more than probable that in those days of chivalry and knight-errantry, when, I suppose, all hand weapons were used with more dexterity than at present (the use of the pistol being unknown), that if it were prejudicial or unnecessary to use palming occasionally, its inutility would have been much sooner discovered. If you engage with one, in other respects of superior judgment and execution, palming puts you on a level; if with one of equal skill, it makes you his superior; but in that case, which is not the least dangerous, namely engaging with a desperate bungler, it is perhaps of all things most definitive; for he, not aware of his danger, or in a desperate phrenzy, giving up his own life as lost, and resolved on taking yours, throws continually in a most irregular and violent manner; there is no way, therefore, more terminating than to palm and pass at the same instant. But notwithstanding, I am not for making a constant practice of palming, (for this would be running into the contrary extreme) at least until you are master of some good parades; apprehensive that if you depend upon the left hand too much, perchance you may neglect in some measure your parades. If this indeed was or could be fairly proved a necessary consequence of palming, which I am of opinion it never can, I would then agree to its exclusion from the art of fencing.

56. Every good pass and return should be like the shot of two pistols, fired after each other instantly; for the moment your antagonist's foot is heard, your foot should report your return, and execution should be done before the sound can reach the ear.

57. A great perfection in fencing is changing with exactness; we should remember, that changing is performed by a conical motion, the vertex being at the wrist, as already mentioned, therefore the smallest motion at the shell is sufficient to make a change at the point; also let your parades be elastic, that is, without waiting an instant, or resting on your adversary's Sword. These directions will hold good for all hand weapons. Shakspeare, that rigorous adherer to nature, has the following description in Hamlet:

His antique Sword, rebellious to his arm,
Lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command unequal match'd.
Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage *strikes wide,*
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
Th' unnerv'd father falls.

58. Notwithstanding that many censure the motion at the small of the back, or breaking measure, I must recommend it to be constantly used in loose play, by reason, the pass that might otherwise become central, may only have that direction: for instance, you miss the parade; if you do not break measure you are unavoidably hit, but if you do, there is not only a possibility, but a probability of your not being hit; at the worst, it cannot be altogether so dangerous, provided you do not let your opponent approach too near, which entirely depends on yourself. Again, in many cases it saves retiring, or advancing; when the first, your return must be quicker; when the second, it must also be quicker, without the hazard of your being timed on the advance. A man indeed in this case, as well as in every other, must be careful not to run to an extreme, nor with Hudibrastic agility give such an unmerciful swing, as to leave himself aground on the opposite side, or abandon himself in the least; he must strike at the medium; let him be neither as inflexible as the oak, nor as pliable as the willow.

59. The objection to this, is in some degree the same as to palming, namely, that it prevents a man's acquiring good parade. But to obviate this apparent bad consequence, I would have a person accustom himself to stand against a wall and parry feints; this will make his wrist or parade good: but in loose play, I must confess, I am (as before) for Defence and Execution; nor shall I ever be persuaded, whatever opinion may predominate, to exclude from the art, or not to adopt, any one motion or position, that can have a proper tendency to either.

60. Never engage but when your honour is indeed really concerned, – for your country or your king, your friend, your life, or your property: no matter if your antagonist had overcome thousands, actuated by such a glorious honest impulse, believe me, you will not find him invulnerable.

“What stronger breast-plate than an heart untainted;
Thrice is he arm'd that has his quarrel just;
And he but naked (though lock'd up in steel)
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.”

He deserves to lose his life, who holds it in estimation when his conscience sanctifies the engagement; he attacks the equity of Providence by fearing the catastrophe. If once a dread takes place, all is lost. Homer wisely makes Hector's timidity a forerunner of his defeat. Had Hector never heard of the prowess of Achilles, he would have met him without fear. Impressions therefore of this nature, are of very bad consequence, in respect to men whose character for courage and abilities is very great. Dangers (says the great Fenelon, in his instructions to Telemachus) should ever be carefully avoided, nay, feared at a distance; but when they are unavoidable and present, they

certainly should be despised.⁵ The love of life, if carried beyond a certain degree, leads to destruction instead of security; for courage and resolution protect, whilst cowardice and timidity deprive men of the power of defending.

“Cowards die many times before their deaths,
The valiant never taste of death but once:
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come, when it will come.”

Timidity, indeed, is a base-born passion, which, by a wretched misnomer, is frequently termed Prudence or Humanity, and thus, like other vices, endeavours to hide its deformity in the golden sanctuary of some acknowledged virtue: but he must have a weak head, or a bad heart, who can take vice for virtue, or virtue for its contrary. There can be no mistaking a veteran coolness, for “a pale cold cowardice,” or a despicable pusillanimity. In a word, stand always on the broad bottom of Virtue, and then be in action, as the amiable Rollin describes Virgil in his writings, “Cool even in enthusiasm.”

61. While I despise that wretched timidity of some mens disposition which renders it almost impossible for them to be either a valuable friend, a worthy member of society at large, or even a good neighbour, or safe acquaintance; let no man conceive I am an advocate for, or that I by any means countenance or approve of the Gothic and Cowardly act of duelling. I glory in being one of those who look on such actions with an equal degree of pity and contempt; an action directly contrary to reason and religion, can never be rendered virtually praise-worthy by the wretched predominancy, or the unhappy tyranny of custom. Custom indeed may, and does give weight

5. We find the same sentiment inculcated by Shakspeare; and Tully has pretty much the same idea in the 24th chapter of his Offices.

and strength, nay, almost sanctifies those things, that were originally just or inoffensive, but can never change the absolute nature of any action, by converting wrong into right, or vice into virtue.

Men give up some of their natural rights, and consequently feelings, to enjoy the blessings of society: now he who recurs to this mode of redress, which perhaps would be allowable in the state of nature, breaks his actual or implied contract with society, and as much as in his power lies, turns the face of nature to an Aceldema, a scene of butchery and horror. No gentleman would willingly seek redress by personal engagement with a mean and illiberal man, or a villain of public notoriety; now he who wantonly injures any worthy man, is no better, whatever character he might have formerly supported; for, by a flagrant act of injustice, a man debases himself, and consequently does not deserve to be considered any longer in the light of a gentleman. Again, it is a dogma among Civilians and Lawyers, that there is no real evil without a legal remedy; if this be so, and as the causes of all duels, must be real or imaginary, it follows, that if real, the laws provide satisfaction or retribution, and if ideal, it is petulance or weakness to seek revenge for what has really no existence. Again, duelling does not answer the end proposed, namely, satisfaction. What satisfaction does the duellist receive for a real or an imaginary evil,⁶ perhaps a mere bagatelle? why truly, to be run through the body, or shot through the head.

Duelling is an act of downright cowardice. One of the greatest of the ancients demonstrates in his Ethics, that there is no action of courage in a soldier to fight, if a river runs at his back, into which he must be precipitated if he retreats, or, when the serjeant of the band is ready to transfix the veins of his back with an

6. What a mere trifle (the precendency in a Temporary Council) occasioned the dispute between the two gallant brothers-in-law, the dukes of Beaufort and Nemours, in which the latter was killed; as also their two noble friends, the Counts Herecourt and Ris. A thousand instances of a like nature might be given.

halberd if he swerves from this ranks: and universally, any action that arises from worldly fear of any nature, is truly pusillanimous. Now I believe it cannot be controverted, that the real cause of almost all duels, arises from the fear of the reproaches of mankind; it is this fear, this cowardice, that stimulates men to actions they would otherwise reprobate and abhor. For perhaps there is not in Europe, a man of common understanding and humanity, that would run the chance of murdering, or being murdered, for some trifle scarce worth mentioning, if the fear of a sneering world did not urge him to such a cowardly phrenzy. It was this false idea of honour (as Tully mentions in his Offices) that actuated Callicratidas the Lacedæmonian, in the Peloponnesian war, to continue at Arginusæ, by which he was overcome by the Athenians: and the same false principle, the fear of an idle report, made Cleombrotus, another of their generals, rashly engage with Epaminondas, by which the power of the Lacedæmonians at once fell to the ground. Every man is acquainted with the behaviour of Augustus Cæsar, when challenged to single combat by Mark Anthony: compare the characters of these men, the former is equally revered for his courage, his wisdom, and his clemency, the latter runs away to the arms of his concubine, and meanly abdicates the empire of the world; yet it is Anthony that dares Cæsar to the meeting, and it is Cæsar that declines it.

I perceive the youth as he reads, laughs at this doctrine. What, suffer a man's self to be despised, abused, nay, kicked out of company, by every hectoring fellow he meets with. No, no, sir, this is going farther than I intended; – draw your sword, and prevent any man, however great or exalted, from committing such insult and outrage. The laws of God and man are on your side, and the dignity of human nature requires you should not suffer it to be degraded. But he sends you a message, inviting you to kill him, (or he will kill you) in Cold Blood, the day or two following. This is indeed the point I would willingly settle. I deny from the reasons here adduced (as well as the common arguments used against it), the possibility of any man, as a

Christian, a man of sense and morality, and consequently, as a Gentleman, to accept of such an invitation; – then what is to be done? it is indelicate to point out the line to be pursued. No man of the elevation of soul I am speaking of, that is unwarped by the opinion of a mistaken majority, will think it necessary. But suppose the purport of your answer should be, that you could not consistent with Your ideas of a man, a christian, and a member of society, go to a meeting, where there was no alternative, but to commit Murder or Suicide. Yet notwithstanding, you will always convince the man who attacks your person, that you are both able, and willing to defend it. Go then as usual, neither striving to shun, nor endeavouring to meet this man of blood, to all places you were accustomed to frequent: conscious that you act on the most just and elevated principles, enter all places with your head erect, and if this man of Gath seeks and attacks you, draw then your honest weapon, – your conscience approves of it, and the catastrophe cannot be, in respect to you, justly called fatal.

You have acted thus; – the dread moment is passed; – the point is decided; – what consolation to you? Providence, suppose, has permitted for ends unknown to us, that though just, you fall. How happy your last tho’ awful moments must be! – clear in the eyes of the world, to yourself, and above all, justifiable in the sight of the Almighty. But on the contrary, your adversary has unhappily precipitated himself to the grave, – his intemperate warmth has forced you to punish his injustice and temerity; and while you shed a tear of pity for the fate of the individual, you have the consolation to reflect, that you have rid the world of a man, whose mistaken, whose wretchedly perverted notions of honour, rendered him a curse, instead of a blessing to society.

“Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing, smiles in exile, or in chains,
Like good Aurelius let him reign; or bleed
Like Socrates; that man is great indeed.”

I am aware this is harsh doctrine: to fight an hundred duels (even considering duelling as a spirited act) would require less fortitude and true courage, less passive valour, as the great Blackstone well expresses it; or less of the real “*Altitudo Animi*,” than to decline one, on these manly, rational, and elevated principles: for, to go down with the current, requires scarce any exertion; but uncommon strength and resolution are required, to swim against the stream, to rise superior to the errors and weaknesses of mankind.

62. If prescription is admitted as a sufficient plea to demonstrate the impossibility of avoiding an improper act, all vices as well as duelling, may be defended upon the same principle. Persecution can produce kingdoms, not only those which are blinded by ignorance but even the most enlightened by science, her powerful advocates. Licentiousness of all kinds has nine-tenths at least of mankind on her side; yet are persecution, lust, gluttony, and sloth, not to be despised. Pride, avarice, and dissimulation, are so powerfully and universally predominant in the heart of man, that were we, with invidious inquisitiveness, to turn over the historic page, we should find even the very Clergy to have heretofore fallen into these vices; nay, Dignified Prelates, have been known (*I say some ages ago*) to be haughty, avaricious, and voluptuous. The lust of inordinate power rages like a fever in the breast of mankind: what else should urge many worthy citizens (*of a neighbouring kingdom*) with such keenness and avidity, to hunger and thirst after mural dignities; nay, after being inebriated by an acquisition of honours, they are scarce ever to be satisfied, but are still eager to quaff larger libations at the shrine of Civic power and pre-eminence. Idleness and folly are so general, that I have known a teacher of Mathematics, deviate so far from the propriety of his character, as to write on the very subject of these remarks, yet could any thing more powerfully demonstrate this weakness? – what would mankind conclude of the divine, that should write on the military art, or

the soldier that would harangue on religion and morality? What folly! what insanity! for a man, thus neglecting the refined pleasures of philosophy, to leave himself open, not only to the poignant sarcasms of the ingenious, but even to the broad grins and loud laughter of vociferous dulness!

Honesty and integrity are such strangers to the world, that men most capable of distinguishing that fine line, that celestial meering, which upon all occasions divides right from wrong, have been known, alas! more than once, to depress the former and espouse the latter. I have been told, it is common for (*French*) lawyers and advocates, notwithstanding they are conscious of being in the wrong, and are depriving the fabled widow of a scanty subsistence, or the unhappy orphan of his untimely and mutilated inheritance, for a paltry emolument, to debase language, degrade eloquence, make reason blush and justice tremble, in order that wealthy and plethoric oppression, should triumph over the wretched inanition of impoverished and appal'd innocence. Yet will any man maintain that pride, avarice, ambition, idleness and dishonesty are no crimes, because mankind in general are prone to, and give into these vices? For shame! away with such reasoning.

63. The eagerness most young men have to arrive at loose play, I take in a great measure to be the cause we have so few good Swordsmen; for they in a manner force their teachers to advance them, tho' against their judgment, before they are grounded in what is, in my opinion, the most material, and what so few ever attain to, namely, advancing and retiring perfectly in the line, and throwing regularly and with a fine opposition. Let any person (for any one who has the rules imprinted on his mind is capable) watch attentively even those who have acquired the name of good Swordsmen, and he will find few adhere, with the desired accuracy, to the rules prescribed for a proper advance, allonge and retreat. For tho' some very illiberally charge their masters with retarding them, I believe for one who is injured by that

means, (if ever any one was) five hundred are prejudiced by an intemperate zeal in the teacher to advance his scholars, and make them distinguished. The major part of mankind are not real judges of any art or science, therefore frequently give applause for a superficial, more than for a solid knowledge; being qualified in some measure to taste the one, but having neither feeling nor discernment to relish the other. Masters through interest, being approved by a majority, either to captivate the public, or through a want of judgment, or rather of resolution, are often content to fall into the prevailing error; sometimes, particularly in the more abstract studies, they may indeed be justifiable. Some understandings have not [.]line enough to sound any of the sciences; there is a certain force necessary to break through the resisting medium by which they are surrounded; and, without apology for the expression, those who arrive at their happy mansions, if their genius and application are not equal, they must be inversely proportional. Masters, as well as writers in general, do not seem to be aware of the difficulty a youth labours under, to conceive distinctly what they see with noon-day clearness, therefore often pass the tiro to something new before he is grounded in the old, and by that means render his ideas of all imperfect and confused.

64. Now in order to expedite the learner with the wished for rapidity, and at the same time to ground him thoroughly in Allonging, Advancing and Retreating, I submit the following device. Let a right line be marked out on the floor, and two sticks placed perpendicularly thereon, a few feet or yards asunder; then throw yourself in guard upon this line, your eye being in that direction when the perpendicular next you covers the remote one; advance on this line, and if you deviate therefrom, you can easily correct yourself without any help whatever, then allonge out, and see whether you cover the two perpendiculars as formerly; perhaps it might also be convenient to mark on the nearest upright, the height you should raise your wrist when you

allonge or advance; but there is a difficulty in determining this by any object, except one very remote, for you will see the tops of the sticks under a greater angle, the nearer you approach; but if the object be very remote, as before, your advancing the length of a large room, will not to sense alter the visual angle; but it would not be ten minutes trouble, to mark out in presence of a teacher, or a judicious friend, on the nearest perpendicular, the different elevations the wrist should be on a level with, at each allonge. It is with this art as with several others; a master always at hand, frequently prevents a youth from studying and meditating. I would by no means be understood, that I did not maintain, constant lessons from a master absolutely essential; but I would have him inured to think for himself upon all occasions, and only be accustomed to apply to superior judgment, when after speculating, he could not assign a reason for, or discover the cause of such a direction, or such an effect: for, where a man applies a force without knowing the reason of his exertion, I can look on him, in regard to that action, as no better than a mere mechanical power.⁷

65. To accustom yourself to keep the left foot steady, you may when pushing against a wall (on which a small cushion might be placed at the proper height) tie a piece of string to the ankle, or to the foot, (or have a cord with a loop) and the other end to a weight of one or two pounds; by this you will discover the moment you flip or move the foot, by the check: this is better than fixing your foot over a determined spot, as you must lose your attitude to discover if you have moved from that point; it is also better than fixing it to an immovable object, for the check might be too great for the ankle to receive without hurt, or the apprehension thereof might prevent a person from throwing with a sufficient spirit.⁸ A device which I take to be a good one, for

7. See Remark 90.

8. Wearing Sandals, perhaps, might preclude the necessity of this remark; which, as well as the former, is intended only for those who are

those whose professions may engage them in the day, is to practice at night, which may be very easily effectuated by placing all the lights in the room at the back, (then advance, retire, or push against the wall) and you will have your attitude accurately represented by your shadow on the opposite surface. These hints, I think are sufficient, as several improvements may be made according to circumstances: it is enough for me to shew the possibility of improving when alone, or in absence of your teacher.

66. That fine method of retiring with a slide, which is both expeditious and graceful, and should always be practiced when you fence on a plain surface, I think would be dangerous on an irregular one; but let the left foot be lifted off the ground and laid down at once, this will prevent you from stumbling or falling, which on any rise in the ground might otherwise be the case, were you to slide as usual; as one who has been always accustomed to fence on a level will certainly do. Therefore, I would have young gentlemen accustom themselves to fence on flags, as well as the sod; and if sometimes on pavement, it would by no means be improper: for besides it being necessary to acquire the method of advancing I recommend to be practised on a rugged surface, it will prove to them, that no dependance must be laid on the stamps wherewith some people are confused on boards. I have known those who have succeeded in perplexing unsteady fencers, by a thundering stamp, an Indian warhoop, and an ha!⁹ on their attack: such exclamations may sometimes be of

resolved to become good Swordsmen.

9. Good Swordsmen, in France, use a small exclamation, which has a fine effect, and is very proper, as it frequently deceives: thus for instance, when two great Swordsmen are fencing, perhaps a pause ensues; this engaging the attention of the spectators, one of them suddenly cries Un! on changing; and if he in the least disorders his antagonist, he instantly makes his single feint, saying, Un, deux, la! Sometimes he says, Un deux! and makes a feint, Un deux, trois la!

service, if used with discretion and occasionally; but there is an equal share of weakness in being moved at, as in depending on, such adventitious auxiliaries. Mr. Rollin's description of young Manlius, previous to his engaging the Gaul, a remarkable instance in Roman history, is not unapplicable to our present remark. "The Roman was of a reasonable size, and such as one would desire in a soldier; his arms were rather adapted to use, than intended for beauty; he was not heard to raise any cries, or make any violent motions in advancing; but full of intrepid courage and tacit indignation, he reserved all his efforts for the combat."

67. There is no popular opinion more erroneous, than that when men are so unhappy as to be under a necessity of defending themselves in reality, all they have been taught and accustomed to at the foils is neglected; for, on the contrary, the attitude will precede even thought; and one skilled in fencing, will throw himself mechanically into that position he has been habituated to; unless anger or fear are entirely predominant, and this cannot be in a moral and spirited man; and all men should be considered as such, until they prove the contrary.

68. As in the time of a feint, a pass may be sent in, it seems to me, therefore, necessary that you should disorder your adversary's sword, that is, put his point from the line, before you feint; as it will be very dangerous to depend upon his coming to a parade: for you will almost certainly be hit if your adversary passes while you feint; it is not impossible you may hit him; but besides it being much in his favour this by no means answers the intention of the art, which is at least, equally concerned in preserving yourself, as in annoying your adversary.

69. There are many, who may think that the passes and parades, as well as all motions and exertions in this art, are, or ought to be, so very expeditious, that it is scarce possible to attain so great a dexterity in their performance, as many of these remarks may seem to require; but let such call to mind, with what accuracy and rapidity the fingers, wrists, and arms, are moved by those who arrive to any degree of excellence on the violin, &c. By this and many other instances which might be given, they will be convinced, that care and perseverance, are capable of uniting the greatest velocity, with the most perfect precision.

70. When a forced thrust is parried with the prime, which occasionally will answer very well; I have heard it acknowledged, even by those who would exclude palming in general, that it is allowable to put the adversary's sword from the breast with the left hand; and I am informed the politest fencers, when throwing a flankonade, guard the breast in like manner; at least, if it is not allowed, it would be very dangerous, if not absolutely wrong, ever to make use of the prime; and perhaps the same may be said of the flankonade, except on a return.

71. If you are so unhappily circumstanced, as to be under a necessity of engaging a man, whom you have reason to think would take any advantage; be on your guard, lest he should instantly on your joining blades, throw with his left hand his hat, glove, &c. with violence in your face and pass at the same instant; for by such an artful and mean device, the poorest swordsman, might hit the best fencer in Europe. If any thing of this nature should ever happen, instead of swerving for a moment, allonge with the greatest vigour, and perfectly in the line: I believe without this, there is not a possibility of your escaping; but by instantly darting forward, you may be time enough to preserve yourself, and perhaps your pass take place also.

72. As the right foot should always be exactly on the line; I think the left toe should not be much turned out, but rather cross the line at right angles nearly; by this you will be more steady, your base encreasing in breadth; for if you conceive a line drawn from your left toe (when in guard) to your right toe, and then to your left heel, the triangle formed by your left foot and these two lines, should be nearly isosceles; as it is evident the nearer it approaches to an equality of sides, provided you preserve the line, you must be proportionally the firmer on the ground.

73. The center of gravity of a man being the middle point between the hips; it follows, the more central nearly he keeps his point (on the line), or rather the more central he keeps the line of direction, that is, the line which may be conceived to connect the center of gravity and the center of the earth, the more general command he must have of his body, and the more ability to advance, &c. with strength and spirit.

74. If your adversary advances spiritedly, or rather warmly, you may retire once or twice, &c. and on his advancing again, which it is probable he will with confidence, change the line instantly upon him; that is, let the line you now have taken, cross the former at right angles, by which you flank your antagonist, and perhaps hit him; but this, in general, had better not be attempted, unless you find yourself distressed by coming too near a wall, or perceive you have the worst of it if you proceed perfectly regular.

75. I think foils should, in the handle and blade, nearly resemble the shape of the swords in fashion, and if possible, they should be of the same weight: perhaps by changing the shape of the

blade, they will be more liable to break on advancing too near, or hurt somewhat more on your hitting, or being hit, than the foils now used. But these circumstances, as they must have a tendency to make men more cautious, I believe will be rather serviceable in general, than disadvantageous.¹⁰

76. If ever you are set upon by a number of assassins, (for if more than one person attacks an honest and inoffensive man, they deserve that epithet) I think you cannot be advised better for your manner of defence, than by recurring to the well known Roman story, of the surviving Horatius, when left to engage the three Albans, the Curiatii: for, by the laudable artifice of retiring, it is morally certain you will separate them for a moment (as some one will be more sanguine and precipitate than the rest), an instant being sufficient for extirpating them singly, if you are determined and expeditious.

77. Above all let your judgment and resolution be apparent in preserving your line, with the most rigorous precision, as a moment's deviation may not only be dangerous, but irreparable. It would be almost better to make no parade, than by parrying, to lose your line and opposition; and were we to view it merely as a point of honour, we indeed must pronounce it most shameful, as it generally proceeds from timidity, and the pass received in such an attitude, wounds your honour thro' your person. Shakspeare makes old Siward on hearing of the death of his son, ask with heroic ardour, "Had he his hurts before." And Priam, in his pathetic speech to Hector, before he engages Achilles, consoles himself for the loss of his sons formerly slain, by reflecting that their wounds were all honourably received on the breast: and

10. The grip of a small sword, I think, should be longer than that of a Cutteau de Chace, or Hanger, as it is held in a different position; this is not sufficiently attended to, – I have seen some Swords properly formed in this respect, at Marsh's, Sword Cutler near Essex-Bridge.

Pyrrhus, after defeating the Romans near Heraclia, finding all their wounds received before, cries out, in an apostrophe, no less indeed favourable to himself, than a just tribute to the bravery of the slain, "How easy could the world be conquered by Romans, were they commanded by Pyrrhus."

78. The blade of a sword has three parts, the feeble, which is one extreme; the fort, the middle; and the shoulder, the other extreme: the handle has likewise three parts; the shell, which is next the shoulder; the grip, the middle of the handle or part covered by the hand; and the pommel, the other extreme.

79. I must again repeat, that I am aware of censure for considering the sword in a speculative light, and treating an art that has been considered to arise wholly from indefatigable practice, in the light of a science. But I must confess I should be better pleased to be able to reason thereon, than I would be to have the greatest execution devoid of theory; for by the one, numbers might benefit, while the former kind of knowledge is centered in self. I am strengthened in this opinion, as I find the greatest genius of the antients, both as to speculative and practical knowledge, value himself more on one discovery and demonstration in speculative geometry, than for innumerable of the greatest performances ever compleated by man: this, by the way, evinces that when speculative men descend to the executive, they have the greatest advantages over those who are ignorant of theory, and unaccustomed to reason from first principles.

80. Do not lie full in quart or tierce, but between both; and on making the thrust, then turn to the full pass, and on recovery let your hand come to the same position it was in before you made the allonge: for instance, you lie in tierce and push tierce, let

your wrist be turned more to the tierce on the pass than when you lay in tierce (and the same in quart), for you will find yourself very much distressed, if you keep your wrist to the full tierce on recovery, therefore let the hand move towards the quart.

81. Though I first intended these remarks should principally consist of original hints; on reflection I imagined it might be acceptable to mention and define a few terms, and insert some lessons that may be useful to gentlemen who have not always at hand a master for their instruction.

82. The terms generally used are, – In guard, advance, retire, allonge, a pass or thrust, parry, parry quart, throw quart, parry tierce, throw tierce, parry low quart, parry seagoon; flankonade, quart over, half circle, round parade on the quart and on the tierce, or the counter in quart or tierce, octave, feinting, changing, slipping, attacking, breaking measure, binding, disordering, opposition, heel parade, singling, the line, palming, answering, abandoned, prime, a bate, a batter, light or an open, half allonge, recovering, closing, a hit, &c.

83. Answering, is when you feint and your adversary goes to parry where you feint, which gives you a right to proceed with your design; but if you are not answered, you may use some other kind of attack, or wait for his coming on: for instance, if my intention is to feint tierce and throw quart, if when I feint, my adversary goes to the tierce parade, then I may proceed and throw a full quart; but if he does not, that is, if he does not answer me and I throw quart, he is fully prepared to parry, therefore, I can have no great expectation of that pass becoming central. In all feints be cautious to deviate as little from the line as possible, for by so doing you lessen the danger of being timed, and your pass can be sent in with greater expedition. By

opposition, you are to understand such an attitude, that a pass in the line can scarce become central, that is, in every allonge; if the sword arm is not extended exactly in the line, there is said to be no opposition. The heel parade or low quart, is parrying with a bate from the shoulder; this parade I think dangerous in general, (except when a seagoon is well thrown, and then it will be found much more expeditious and effectual than the half circle) yet it will not be so dangerous if the advice I have given for flanking be put in practice, to wit, applying the force in such a manner as will not, should you miss the parade, make you cross the line.

I shall mention a few lessons without giving them perhaps, as they should follow one another with a beginner: In guard, advance, advance, advance, ditto, retire, retire, retire, ditto, allonge, recover, allonge in quart, recover, allonge in tierce, recover, allonge, recover, parry quart, throw quart, parry tierce, throw tierce, parry low quart, parry seagoon, parry quart, parry tierce, ditto, ditto, ditto.

Advance in quart, and throw quart, advance in tierce, and throw tierce, ditto.

Advance in tierce, change and throw quart; advance in quart, slip and throw tierce; feint tierce and throw quart, feint quart, and throw quart over, ditto, ditto.

Cut quart over the point, cut tierce over the point; retire in tierce, and throw tierce; retire in quart, and throw quart; retire, parry quart and throw quart over; ditto.

Retire, and parry the counter in tierce, and throw tierce; retire, and parry the counter in quart and throw quart; retire and parry the counter in tierce, and drop a seagoon; but let the point have the proper, that is, a central direction, before you begin to move your body on the allonge; the same repeated again.

If you are bore on the quart, slip and throw tierce or quart over; if bore on the tierce, slip and throw quart; if bore on the quart,

feint tierce and throw quart; if bore on the tierce, feint quart and throw quart over; or in any of the above make a double feint if you please: ditto, ditto.

Returns from the round parade, first, when you parry in quart throw a full quart, if with the tierce throw tierce; second, change and throw; third, feint and pass; fourth, double on your adversary's sword and throw: when you parry in quart, let the hand and wrist be turned up in quart as much as possible, this keeps your sword in the line, and throws your adversary's off.

Advance with a feint in order to try the abilities of your antagonist, if he is a cool swordsman, he will pay no regard thereto, but if he does, you may hit him at once.

Advance and flank; a quart thrown, parry with a flankonade; advance in segoon, feint tierce and throw segoon. Your adversary cuts quart over the point, wait till he has come round to the line and flank him with spirit.

I lie in quart out of distance, my adversary advances in tierce, I time him by throwing quart; he advances in quart, time him by throwing tierce or quart over; he advances in tierce, perhaps expecting to be timed with a quart, then feint quart and throw quart over.

Suppose you are both lying in quart; a quart thrown, do you come under and parry with the tierce edge, your hand not altered from the quart position, and throw a fine quart over; this is an excellent thrust, provided you are quick at the parade. Advance spiritedly, bearing strong upon quart, and leaving a great open; your opponent, it is ten to one, throws tierce or quart over, this is what you want, and instantly send tierce along the blade, you will in this case almost hit to a certainty; I have scarce ever known it to fail with any man who was unacquainted with your design; but the danger lies in your adversary's feinting, yet if you are accustomed to palm, you guard against this: I repeat it, if you acquire dexterity in this pass, and facing a good fencer, I know of nothing that seems to bid fairer for certainty.

84. If you do not intend to palm, let your left hand on every pass fall to the side, with the back to the left thigh; some strike the palm to the left thigh, but the former is better (as a motion in the scapula, and the articulation of the shoulder is prevented), for according to the universal maxim that I would wish to have established, every motion must have an oblique, if not a direct tendency to offence or defence, and as this has no reference to either, it is superfluous, and therefore ought to be rejected.

85. I look on the knowledge of the sword, to be of more utility than at first presents itself: I imagine it must be of service in every sudden exigence, as a person who is a good swordsman, is accustomed to determine in a moment what is best to be done, and this will certainly have a remote effect in general emergencies.

86. Cutting over the point is often very successful; for, I apprehend the elastic extension of the flexure of the arm, is by far the quickest motion of an allonge. But as cutting is performed by two motions, one on raising the wrist to get clear of your adversary's sword, and the other on the pass; therefore, it seems to me to be possible, at your adversary's first motion, for you to send in a spirited plain quart. If he performs his part with great accuracy, by covering his breast, you perhaps will hit him in the sword arm, which I think as desirable a circumstance as can happen. If you are too near to allonge out when your adversary cuts, suppose you were to make use of what may be called a reverse allonge; that is, leave the right foot where it is, throw the left leg and body instantly back, and dart forward your arm perfectly in the line; it is more than probable he will run on your point, which will answer as well as if you sent your point into him.

87. The disagreeable sensations young men must feel on beginning to fence, should be one reason to induce them to an early application: and fencing, I think, much fitter for youth than is usually imagined; for, the exercises of boys should always mark their sex, they should be in some degree manly and spirited. Rousseau, in his treatise on education, says, I have sometimes asked the reason why children were not made to learn games of skill and address; such as tennis, fives, the bow, billiards, foot-ball, &c. The answer given me was, that some of those games were above their strength, and that neither their limbs nor organs were sufficiently formed for the rest; and that games less fatiguing and dangerous would be preferable; but for this very reason, Rousseau approves of those games; for, continues he, can we, who are formed for vigour and activity, imagine they are to be attained without trouble; and what defence shall we be capable of making, if we are never attacked. People seldom play with any spirit when they can be faulty without risk; and he therefore prefers tennis, &c. for boys, to shuttle-cock, &c. for if a shuttle-cock falls it hurts nobody; but nothing makes the arm so pliant, as to be obliged to cover the head with it; nothing renders the eye so nice and exact as to be under a necessity of guarding it from harm: to spring from one end of the hall to the other, to judge the rebound of a ball while in the air, to return it with a sure and steady arm; such diversions as these, are less proper for men, than to give them strength and vigour while young. I believe nothing can be more applicable to fencing than these observations.

88. As disarming¹¹ is attended with the most decisive and momentous consequences, I shall adduce two or three instances, wherein there may be a reasonable probability of success; e.g. Suppose your adversary throws a spirited tierce or quart over, do you instantly take his feeble with a nervous tierce parade, never deviating from your line, but darting the reserve out of your arm and allonging spiritedly; it is probable your adversary will be either hit or disarmed. Should he, aware of your intention, make a single feint, instead of the quart over, you may come forcibly to the half circle, which perhaps will accomplish your purpose. But should your adversary multiply his motions, which must at all times be dangerous to him, your instantaneous return from the half circle will counteract his deception of it; for *cæteris paribus*, they must mutually destroy each the other's effect: and lastly, by coming forcibly to the round parade, either in quart or tierce, you will have another fair chance of disarming your antagonist. Were I desired to give a short general rule for disarming, I would recommend the bearing, or rather parrying spiritedly with your own fort, on your adversary's feeble, endeavouring to throw the sword toward that side, his hand must open of itself; this is co-operating with nature.

11. The antients branded with an indelible stigma, the man who had been deprived of, or had derelinguished his weapon of defence. Horace briefly and elegantly censures it in these words, "*Relictâ non bene parmulâ.*" – In Sparta the very women, when they embraced their sons and their husbands, previous to an engagement with an enemy, conjured them *to return armed as they were, or never to return*: For their great lawgiver, Lycurgus, (whose institutions, in general, are revered to this day) had ordered in the first table of his laws, that the very statues of their Deities, even to Venus herself, should be represented armed and in military array; and this was in order to impress on the minds of the people at large the most favourable and honourable ideas of the use of arms.

Having disarmed your antagonist,¹² and thus vindicated the first law of nature, you must be vigilant lest you should violate any of her noble and sacred principles, by the farther prosecution of an enemy now solely at your mercy. Humanity revolts at such an idea: nor does human nature admit of a more noble triumph, a more glorious revenge, than to possess the power to punish an enemy; — yet, to have the will and resolution to forgive him.

89. In writing on this subject, as it is almost confined, at least in these kingdoms, to Gentlemen, and Men of Honour, I shall, without apology, make and adopt some extracts, which it is impossible that any one man of genius or true courage can be displeased with; to strengthen those who have a true, and rectify those who have a false idea of those terms.

“Every principle that is a motive to good actions ought to be encouraged, since men are of so different a make, that the same principle does not work equally upon all minds; what some men are prompted to by conscience, duty, or religion, which are only different names for the same thing, others are prompted to by honour.

“The sense of honour is of so fine and delicate a nature, that it is only to be met with in minds which are naturally noble, or in such as have been cultivated by great examples or a refined education. This, therefore, is chiefly designed for those who by means of any of these advantages are, or ought to be actuated by this glorious principle.

“But as nothing is more pernicious than a principle of action when it is misunderstood, I shall consider honour with respect to

12. Whenever you disarm, secure your adversary's weapon; in real action the utility is evident; and if fencing, your politely presenting your antagonist with his foil, will do away the unpleasing sensation which in some degree is ever attendant on this circumstance, for nothing demonstrates superiority more than an instantaneous and fine disarm. — I think indeed, beginners should by no means ever attempt disarming.

three sorts of men: First of all, with regard to those who have a right notion of it; secondly, with regard to those who have a mistaken notion of it; and thirdly, with regard to those who treat it as chimerical and turn it into ridicule.

“In the first place, true honour, though it be of a different principle from religion, is that which produces the same effects. The lines of action, though drawn from different parts, terminate in the same point. Religion embraces virtue, as it is enjoined by the laws of God; honour, as it is graceful and ornamental to human nature. The religious man fears, the man of honour scorns to do an ill action. The latter considers vice as something that is beneath him, the other as something offensive to the Divine Being. The one as what is unbecoming, the other as what is forbidden. Thus Seneca speaks in the natural and genuine language of a man of honour, when he declares, that were there no God to see or punish vice he would not commit it, because it is of so mean, so base, and so vile a nature. I shall conclude this head with the description of honour in the part of young Juba.

Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,
The noble minds distinguishing perfection,
That aids and strengthens virtue where it meets her,
And imitates her actions where she is not.
It ought not to be sported with.

Cato.

“In the second place, we are to consider those who have mistaken notions of honour, and these are such as establish any thing to themselves for a point of honour, which is contrary to the laws of God or of their country, who think it more honourable to revenge, than to forgive an injury, who make no scruple of telling a lie, but would put any man to death who accuses them of it, who are more careful to guard their reputation by their courage, than by their virtue. True fortitude is indeed so becoming in human nature, that he who wants it, scarce deserves the name of a man; but we find several who so much abuse this notion, that they place the whole idea of honour in a kind of

brutal courage, by which means we have had many among us who have called themselves men of honour, that would have been a disgrace to a gibbet. In a word, the man who sacrifices any duty of a reasonable creature to a prevailing mode of fashion, who looks upon any thing as honourable that is displeasing to his Maker, or destructive to society, who thinks himself obliged by this principle to the practice of some virtues and not of others, is by no means to be reckoned among true men of honour.

“Timogenes was a lively instance of one actuated by false honour: Timogenes would smile at a man’s jest who ridiculed his Maker, and at the same time run a man through the body that spoke ill of his friend. Timogenes would have scorned to have betrayed a secret that was entrusted with him, tho’ the fate of his country depended upon the discovery of it. Timogenes took away the life of a young fellow in a duel for having spoken ill of Belinda, a lady whom he himself had seduced in her youth, and betrayed into want and ignominy. To close his character; Timogenes, after having ruined several poor tradesmens families, who had trusted him, sold his estate to satisfy his creditors; but, like a man of honour, disposed of all the money he could make of it, in paying off his play-debts, or to speak in his own language, his debts of honour.

“In the third place, we are to consider those persons who treat this principle as chimerical, and turn it into ridicule. Men who professedly are of no honour, are of a more profligate and abandoned nature than even those who are actuated by false notions of it, as there is more hopes of a Heretic than an Atheist. These sons of infamy consider honour with old Syphax, in the play before mentioned, as a fine imaginary notion, that leads astray young unexperienced men, and draws them into real mischiefs, while they are engaged in the pursuits of a shadow. These are generally persons who, in Shakspeare’s phrase, are worn and hackneyed in the ways of men, whose imaginations are grown callous, and have lost all those delicate sentiments which

are natural to minds that are innocent and undepraved; such old battered miscreants ridicule every thing as romantic that comes in competition with their present interest, and treat those persons as visionaries, who dare stand up in a corrupt age for what has not its immediate reward joined to it. The talents, interest, or experience of such men, make them very useful in all parties, and at all times. But whatever wealth and dignities they may arrive at, they ought to consider, that every one stands as a blot in the annals of his country, who arrives at the temple of honour, by any other way than through that of virtue.

90. “The inhabitants of the earth may properly be ranged under the two general heads, Gentlemen and Mechanics. This distinction arises from the different occupations wherein they exert themselves. The former of these species is universally acknowledged to be more honourable than the other, who are looked upon as a base and inferior order of men. But if the world is in the right in this natural judgment, it is not generally so, in the distribution of particular persons, under their respective denominations. It is a clear settled point, that the gentleman should be preferred to the mechanic. But who is the gentleman and who is the mechanic, wants to be explained.

“The philosophers distinguish two parts in human nature; the rational and the animal. Now if we attend to the reason of the thing, we shall find it difficult to assign a more just and adequate idea of these distinct species, than by defining the gentleman to be him, whose occupation lies in the exertion of his rational faculties; and the mechanic him, who is employed in the use of his animal parts, or the organic part of his body.

“The concurring assent of the world in preferring gentlemen to mechanics, seems founded in that preference which the rational part of our nature is intitled to above the animal: When we consider it in itself, as it is the seat of wisdom and understanding, as it is pure and immortal, and as it is that which, of all the

known works of the creation, bears the brightest impress of the Deity.

“It claims the same dignity and preeminence, if we consider it in respect to its object. Mechanical motives or operations are confined to a narrow circle of low and little things: Whereas reason inquires concerning the nature of intellectual beings, the great Author of our existence, its end and the proper methods of attaining it: or, in case that noble faculty submits itself to nearer objects, it is not, like the organic powers, confined to a slow and painful manner of action, but shifts the scenes, and applies itself to the most distant objects with incredible ease and dispatch; neither are the operations of the mind like those of the hands, limited to one individual object, but at once extended to a whole species.

“And as we have shewn the intellectual powers to be nobler than those of motion, both in their own nature, and in regard to their object; the same will still hold, if we consider their office. It is the province of the former, to preside and direct; of the latter, to execute and obey. Those who apply their hands to the materials, appear the immediate builders of an edifice; but the beauty and proportion of it is owing to the architect, who designed the plan in his closet. And in like manner, whatever there is, either in art or science, of use or regularity, will be found to proceed from the superior principle of reason and understanding. These reflections, however obvious, do nevertheless seem not sufficiently attended to by those, who, being at great pains to improve the figure and motions of the body, neglect the cultivation of the mind.

“From the premisses it follows, that a man may descend from an antient family, wear fine cloaths, and be master of what is commonly called good breeding, and yet not merit the name of Gentleman. All those whose principal accomplishment consists in the exertion of the mechanic powers, whether the organ made use of be the eye, the muscles of the face, the fingers, feet, or any other part, are in the eye of reason to be esteemed Mechanics.”

91. The epithets Gentleman, and Man of Honour or real greatness, convey pretty much one and the same idea; yet, as there are degrees in vice, so there are in virtue; and I think men of true greatness and solid glory, are no other than men who possess, in a more eminent degree, the most refined and genuine ideas of this noble and elevated principle, honour. How many pretenders have we, that endeavour to pass on the world as men who have true notions honour and solid glory; who, indeed, may seem great in the execution of the little occurrences of life, but on any exigence, when the great soul could have an opportunity for its exertion, how little do they appear. In short, the endeavouring to seem to possess more true Courage and real Magnanimity than we have ever nurtured in our breast, is an involuntary tribute mankind in general pay these virtues.

True Greatness, and solid Glory, can only be shewn in the eminent exertion of some uncommon virtue (for virtues of such a nature, that the want of them is attended with ignominy, can have no great degree of honour annexed to their possession); but more particularly, in a contempt of riches and pleasure, a love of country, and what surpasses all others in the catalogue of virtues, *the forgiving of injuries, and despising revenge*. Souls capable of exerting this God-like attribute, are indeed, truly great, heroic, and uncommon; it is a virtue of such magnitude, and weight, that vulgar souls cannot contain, nor weak minds support it. So true is it what Mr. Addison says in some of his papers, (which tho' they are more admired than any tracts of a like nature, yet they can never be sufficiently so) "A Coward has often fought, a Coward has often conquered, but *a Coward never forgave*. The power of doing that flows from a strength of soul conscious of its own force, whence it draws a certain safety, which its enemy is not of consideration enough to interrupt; for it is peculiar in the make of a brave man, to have his friends seem much above him, his enemies much below him." Beautiful as these lines are, they must fall short of exciting the idea one would wish to raise of

such a character; but I am apt to imagine, as some things are too volatile to bear the chains of a definition, as Mr. Burke elegantly expresses it, there are others too great to admit one, and perhaps what solid Glory and real Greatness are, may best be conveyed by example: for to the honour of human nature, such are not wanting, to which every man must pay the just tribute of his applause; and tho' few have strength enough to imitate such actions, yet all mankind are sufficiently ingenuous to admire and revere them.

92. The love of country, and heroic intrepidity, are seldom mentioned without the tribute of admiration being offered to the manes of a Regulus, a Curtius, a Scævola, or a Decius: but why should moderns, and more especially Irishmen, recur to the antique volumes of Roman records for instances of heroism and patriotic valour; their own history, both of remote and latter times, furnishing innumerable instances of heroic magnanimity, that cannot be exceeded either in Roman or Grecian story. To mention but one of antient times; (for the united voice of nations, for near ages past, proclaim the bravery of the emigrated poor, but not dishonoured, Irish) that of the Fiangaulls when engaging the Danes by sea, was as desperate and heroic as any ever executed.

I shall also, for brevity sake, wave repeating the often, tho' not too much celebrated actions of a Fabricius, a Cincinnatus, a Quintus, and a Scipio, in the despising riches and sensual enjoyments, in order to mention an instance of the highest degree of honour, and greatness of soul, in the exertion of that first of all virtues, *the forgiving*, or rather, *nobly revenging of injuries*. The following is mentioned by one of the best and most amiable of authors. "When the great Condé commanded the Spanish army in Flanders, and laid siege to one of our towns, a soldier being ill-treated by a general officer for some disrespectful words he had let fall, answered very coolly, that he should soon make him repent of it. Fifteen days after, the same general officer ordered

the colonel of the trenches to find him out a bold and intrepid fellow in his regiment for a notable piece of work he wanted to be done, for which he promised a reward of an hundred pistoles. The soldier we are speaking of, who passed for the bravest in the regiment, offered his service, and taking with him thirty of his comrades, of whom the choice was left to himself, he discharged his commission, which was a very hazardous one, with incredible courage and success. Upon his return, the general officer highly commended him, and gave him the hundred pistoles he had promised. The soldier presently distributed them among his comrades, saying he did not serve for pay, and demanded only, that if his late action seemed to deserve any recompence, they would make him an officer. *And now, Sir,* adds he to the general officer, who did not know him, *I am the soldier you abused so much fifteen days ago, and I told you I would make you repent it.* The general officer, in great admiration, and melting into tears, threw his arms around his neck, begged his pardon, and gave him a commission that very day." Mr. Rollin further adds, that, "The great Condé took a pleasure in telling this story, as the bravest action in a soldier he had ever heard of."

93. Public institutions ever mark the policy, taste, and judgment of the times; for though power and riches lead to the refinement of society; yet, that very refinement often creates an enervating luxury, which is the parent of poverty and imbecility. For this reason, institutions that have a tendency to enfeeble the body, or to weakenn the mind, no man who really loves his country, would ever wish to see established: human nature, already too prone to ease, embraces with avidity relaxations that indulge this tendency, more especially when they have the sanction of public approbation. On the other hand, exercises that injure the heart, by inuring it to scenes of cruelty and horror, are ever degrading to the character of those nations and individuals in which they are customary, and to whom they are pleasing. Hence it seems no very easy matter to steer clear of those extremes; for what

polishes, often debilitates; and what animates, frequently renders us ferocious. That refinement of manners, or that corporal strength and activity, obtained but in the same proportion as the mind is injured, are, indeed, too highly purchased acquisitions. Therefore, I think some institutions similar to those established by the French legislature,¹³ for the encouragement of this art, would in some measure mark the spirit and liberality of the present period; for I think this exercise an happy mean between the two extremes hinted at; as fencing is spirited, without ferocity, refined without effeminacy, and warlike, without cruelty. And I have not a doubt, if a society of gentlemen were instituted on a proper plan, the legislature would confer on the gentlemen, publicly excelling in this art, some honourable mark of their approbation.

I must confess, I think it a shameful reflection, that my countrymen should rest contented, while any nation on earth is universally allowed to excel them in any exercise, that Irishmen think worthy their attention; but how much more so, in an accomplishment so distinguished to, and characteristic of, the man of spirit and the gentleman.

I beg leave to remind gentlemen, that the Greeks, (the most refined of nations) to hand down to posterity their opinion of manly exercises, made the Olympic Games the great *Æra* of their reckoning of time. The Romans copied the Greeks in the exercises of the Circus, as well as in the honour paid to the victors; and in this they agreed with all the institutions of the

13. In Toulouse, two Swords are given annually by the magistrates, to the two best Fencers; the first gets a gold hilted one, the other a silver; on each are engraven the arms of that ancient and respectable city. This trial lasts three days, on a kind of stage erected for that purpose. Any person is admitted a candidate that is not a professor, and has received a few months instructions from a master teaching in the city. The privileges enjoyed by the successful persons are, the freedom of the theatre that year, and during said time to wear the Sword in the Hotel de Ville, or Town House: an honourable distinction no other persons enjoy.

greatest lawgivers of the antients, as well as with some of the most celebrated of the moderns.¹⁴

94. It may not be improper also to remind gentlemen of the French custom of always throwing quart and tierce, previous to loose play, or the *assaut*. – On a stranger's entering a fencing-school in France, a case of foils is presented to him, the handles cross-ways, and in the salute, (which ought ever to precede the action) they measure their distance within an inch of two of their antagonist's breast.¹⁵ This shews an equal degree of politeness and command of body, and is performed by good fencers with the greatest ease and elegance of motion. As their design in throwing quart and tierce is only to shew the beauty of the attitude, and quickness and accuracy in passing, they never attempt hitting each other; and by parrying, as they always do in a lively manner, as it is expressive of attention, they pay an elegant, tho' silent, compliment to the abilities of their antagonist. By first throwing quart and tierce, they become in some degree acquainted with the abilities of their antagonist, which must excite confidence or circumspection; and, indeed, the easier motions of quart and tierce, seem a very proper prelude to the more vigorous exertions necessary on the *assaut*.

14. Gentlemen who like the idea, and would desire to constitute a body for the encouragement of this art, may intimate their approbation to Mr. Hugh Kelly, fencing-master, Dublin.

15. I think no one should touch his adversary on taking his distance, nor put the button of his foil to the floor; a proper place might be assigned for giving the foil that bent which is sometimes necessary to make it agreeable to the hand. There are many circumstances that masters might enforce the observance of in their schools, by small fines, to which no gentleman could have an objection, as they must be productive of regularity and politeness.

95. There are eight parades, viz. prime, second, (or segoon) tierce, quart, counter in tierce, ditto in quart, (or round parade in quart and tierce) half circle, and octave. Perhaps fencing was formerly taught somewhat differently from the present method; it is certain, the swords were considerably longer, (and of course the foils) being girted higher up, and sometimes held under the arm by the shell down along the body. The Spaniards, (who retain their old customs longer than any other nation) at least those among them who do not copy the French, to this day carry very long swords; and their fencing masters, I am informed, make their scholars extend the arm in tierce when in guard. It cannot be doubted, from the etymology of the terms, that antiently the principal parade was the prime; 2d, segoon; 3d, tierce; 4th, quart, &c. but modern teachers make quart and tierce their 1st and 2d parades, tho' they have retained the old names, signifying third and fourth. We still parry prime on certain close engagements. An ingenious and respectable friend of mine (to whom I am indebted for this remark) informs me, he knew a swordsman in France, who made the prime his constant parade; and by the elastic extension of his arm, scarce ever missed even the best fencer on the return. The segoon, as a parade, is not now used; the half circle being found safer, and to take up more thrusts, and with greater advantage. The heel parade, called by the French, *bas quarte*, or low quart, is, I think, very properly not considered as a distinct parade; for, strictly speaking, it is a bate, or a batter, rather than a parade. — It is but justice to declare, I received the hint for another of the foregoing remarks, from a gentleman, whose perfect knowledge of the sword in theory and practice, is among the least of his accomplishments.

96. I think it would be just policy in any great nation to cultivate the general use of all kinds of arms. I grant, if but one part of the inhabitants acquire this knowledge, it may be productive of the worst consequences, as power creates ambition, and cruelty is frequently the offspring: for those in arms, having power to

oppress, may become actually oppressive; but when an happy equipoise is supported by every reputable individual, being in this respect equal, they will only unite against, and consequently become formidable to a common enemy. Nor will any just power, by any means, be endangered; for no people ever unanimously, with heart and with hand, opposed their governors on moot points; nor until the executive power had first notoriously violated, by a series of oppression, the laws of Nature and of God; which laws are, no doubt, superior to, and the test of, all human institutions.

97. The following extract from a late treatise on Chronic diseases, I shall take the liberty of inserting, in order to rouse men of a sedentary life, to some degree of action, if they hold their own lives, and the good of society, in any degree of estimation. "It is upon the minutest and almost invisible parts of the body our best health, strength, and spirits depend: these fine parts, commonly called capillaries, are little pipes or tubes, the extended continuations of the larger blood vessels, through which the finest parts of the blood must constantly pass, not only to keep these very small channels always free and open, but also that the particles of the blood may in their passage be attenuated, broken, and rubbed into globules perfectly smooth and round, and easily divisible into still less and less, until they escape the sight, assisted even by the microscope, which gives ocular demonstration of this most amazingly minute circulation. I have observed myself, and any curious patient man may see, with a good microscope, in the pellucid membrane of any living animal, this surprizing minuteness; he may select and observe one single vessel, the smallest of those that convey red blood, many of which would not equal the smallest hair in size, through which the blood may be seen passing, not like a fluid, but a number of little red solid balls pushing one another on until they come to the extremity or ramification of the vessel where it divides into two still less. There, the first globule stopping a

little, and recoiling, is pushed on again until it divides into two, and losing its red colour, passes on in the smaller pipes fitted only to receive the serum, which undergoes the same circulation until it be refined into lymph, and thus into still finer fluids, which being thus prepared, escape into a subtilty beyond all possible observation. Now the strength of the heart and arteries alone, in a sedentary course of life, is by no means sufficient to keep up and perpetuate this motion through these capillaries, but requires the assistance and joint force of all the muscles of the body to act by intervals, compress the veins, propel and accelerate the circulation of the whole mass of blood, in order to force and clear these pipes, and to triturate, cribrate, and purify the fluid passing through, forming every particle of it into a perfect globule, which is the form all the atoms of matter must take from much agitation. Without this extraordinary occasional aid, the little vessels would by their natural elasticity, close up into fibres or be obstructed by rough angular particles sticking into them, and stopping all passage. Numberless evils of the Chronic kind, especially all nervous diseases, owe their origin to this cause alone.

“Accordingly, we see most of those who have lived for any time in a state of indolence, grow emaciated and pale by the drying up of those fine vessels, or if they happen to be of a lax habit, having a good appetite, and little to vex them, they may be loaded with fat, but they grow pale withal, many of those fine pipes being nevertheless closed up, so that they appear bloated and their fat unwholesome, having much less blood in their veins than thinner people. Hence we may learn why these languid pale persons, upon the least motion, become faint and breathless, the blood hurrying through the larger vessels yet free, and like a croud, obstructing its own passage, causing a dangerous suffocation; of if they have not been long in this state, nor the capillaries quite closed, they glow with a momentary red, the fine vessels being for that time expanded. This inactivity first forms obstructions in these exquisitely fine parts, upon which the health and vigour both of Body and Mind enirely depend, and

lays the foundation of many diseases to come, which other concomitant circumstances, such as a violent cold, excess of any kind, infection from without, or a particular disposition of the body within, make often fatal to many in this habit of life, and *which those who use exercise never feel.*

“Now I would ask any reasonable person capable of considering this operation of nature with the least glimmering of philosophy, or even the attention of common sense, and most assuredly it concerns every man to consider it well, whether he can conceive it possible to substitute any medicine to be swallowed that shall act upon the blood and vessels like the joint force of all the muscles of the body, acting and re-acting occasionally in a regular course of moderate labour or exercise.” To this let me add the following admirable sentence: “As I am a compound of soul and body, I consider myself obliged to a double scheme of duties; and I think I have not fulfilled the business of the day, when I do not employ the one in labour and exercise, as well as the other in study and contemplation.”

I shall conclude these remarks with observing, that I know of no exercise so spirited and liberal, that can be taken at all seasons, at any hour, either in town or in the country, within doors or without, and at so small an expence of time as that of Fencing.

The writer does not presume to maintain the absolute justness of all the preceding remarks; on the contrary, he acknowledges to have thrown some of them out problematically, in order that their propriety may be evinced, or their inutility demonstrated, by the opinion of the Candid and Judicious. However, if truth forces them to impeach his understanding, he will still rest satisfied, if his heart escapes censure.

F I N I S.